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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 002861

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NL](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: DUTCH COMMENTS FOR NOVEMBER 17-18 EU FMS MEETING

REF: SECSTATE 313454

Classified By: A/PolCouns Nathaniel P. Dean Reason 1.5 (b) and (d)

1. (C) In advance of FM de Hoop Scheffer's participation in the November 17-18 GAERC, Dutch European Correspondent Joep Wijnands offered substantive comments on Israel, Iran, Afghanistan and ESDP (reported septel). While the EU meeting with Israel is happening on the margins of the GAERC, the Dutch expect this to be the major discussion topic at both formal and informal meetings.

Israel

2. (C) Wijnands reports that all EU FMs (not just the troika) have chosen to meet and speak with one voice during their side meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shalom, strongly stressing three key points. The Dutch expect a tense discussion. Using recent UNGA resolution wording, the FMs will emphasize the importance of both the need to dismantle the Israeli fence and withdrawal settlements in Palestinian territory. They will also state their displeasure with the Israeli government's decision not to meet with any EU personnel who have met with Arafat. Many within the EU have called for a boycott of Israel's Ambassador in Brussels as a retaliation to this behavior. (Note: Dutch FM de Hoop Scheffer stated publicly that it is not yet time for such a decision. End Note.) The Dutch want to maintain strong European relations, both politically and economically, with Israel. However, in the current environment, Wijnands commented that it is becoming more difficult to convince some skeptical EU partners of the need for a balanced approach. The Dutch remain concerned about terrorist attacks in the region, but expect most conversation at the GAERC to focus on Israel's relationship with the EU and its role in the MEPP, not Palestine.

Iran

3. (C) GAERC conclusions on Iran will be less-forthcoming than the Dutch wish, and will focus primarily on non-proliferation issues. The GoNL wants to include language that draws attention to other issues, particularly human rights, but are doubtful that such language will be added. The GoNL will co-sponsor a UN resolution with Canada highlighting the poor human rights situation in Iran, assuming "at least a few" other EU countries do so as well. (Note: Both Wijnands and PolOff were surprised that the FM did firmly commit to co-sponsoring despite what other EU countries decide. However, Wijnands stated he is not concerned as a few other EU countries will positively decide to co-sponsor. The FM may be attempting to demonstrate that there is some strong solidarity among at least some EU members on the subject of Iran's poor human rights. End Note.)

Afghanistan

4. (C) Wijnands stated that discussions on Afghanistan will focus on the on-going security situation and the new constitution. While the GoNL finds a "reason for optimism" in the new constitution, it and other EU members remain concerned that there are not enough checks and balances on the powers of the President.

RUSSEL